

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4287
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF
SUBJECT: MFA OFFICIAL ON EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNITY, WEST BANK PARTICI-
PATION AT PNC, ET AL

SUMMARY: THE MFA'S DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE EAST AND MEDITERRANEAN
AFFAIRS (VERED), IN DISCUSSION WITH AN EMBOFF DECEMBER 30
AND JANUARY 3, FOUND NO MODERATION IN THE CAIRO COMMUNIQUE;
SAW EGYPT SEEKING A LOOSELY-STRUCTURED ARAB UNITY AND AN
SPEARATE PLO DELEGATION AT GENEVA TO PREVENT SYRIA FROM
GROWING TOO STRONG; AND PREDICTED THAT ONLY EXILES WOULD
REPRESENT THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AT THE PALESTINIAN NATIONAL
COUNCIL. END SUMMARY

1. EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNITY: THE CAIRO COMMUNIQUE'S EX-
PRESSIONS OF RENEWED EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNITY HAVE THE OBVIOUS
PURPOSE OF EXERTING COMBINED ARAB PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. ANOTHER
EXPLANATION, ACCORDING TO VERED, IS EGYPT'S CONCERN
THAT RIVAL SYRIA MAY BECOME TOO STRONG IN JORDAN AND
IN LEBANON. EGYPT THEREFORE IS PROBABLY INITIATING AN
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EFFORT TO RETAIN ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE THROUGH DOMINATING
A "UNITY" WHICH IS LOOSELY STRUCTURED AND WITHOUT MUCH
SUBSTANCE. SUCH AN EXPLANATION, VERED SAID, IS CONSISTENT
WITH EGYPT'S PAST BEHAVIOR, FOR EXAMPLE, IN FOUNDING THE
ARAB LEAGUE OR IN OPPOSING SYRIAN-IRAQI UNITY IN THE
EARLY 60'S. SYRIA, FOR ITS PART, HAS EVIDENTLY FOUND IT
USEFUL TO DE-EMPHASIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH JORDAN AS COORDI-

NATION WITH EGYPT GROWS.

2. THAT EGYPT AND SYRIA ARE STILL WORKING AT CROSS PURPOSES--
ALTHOUGH COORDINATING THEIR MOVES TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE--
CAN BE SEEN IN THEIR IDFFERING POSITIONS ON THE NATURE OF
THE PLO REPRESENTATION AT GENEVA. FAHMY CALLED FOR A
SPEARATE PLO DELEGATION WHILE KHADDAM FAVORED A COMBINED
ARAB DELEGATION INCORPORATING THE PLO. EGYPT WISHES A
SEPARATE PLO DELEGATION, VERED SAID, SO THAT THE PLO WILL
NOT LOSE ITS DISTINCTIVENESS--A DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD
FAVOR SYRIA.

3. ARAB CONDITIONS FOR "PEACE": VERED FOUND "NO MODERATION"
IN THE COMMUNIQUE AND PRESS STATEMENTS OF FAHMY AND KHADDAM.
THE ARABS WISH TO CONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BASED ON
THE EGYPTIAN-SPONSORED DECEMBER 9 (1976) UN GA RESOLUTION
INSTEAD OF SC RESOLUTION 242. VERED ADDED THAT IT WAS
ALSO CLEAR --FROM KHADDAM'S STATEMENT--THAT A SOVEREIGN
PALESTINIAN ARAB STATE WAS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE
WHOLE OF PALESTINE, NOT JUST IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.
KHADDAM'S USE OF THE PHRASE "THE PALESTINIAN RIGHT TO
ESTABLISH A STATE IN THEIR NATIONAL HOMELAND" COULD HAVE
ONLY ONE MEANING IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

4. WEST BANK/GAZA REPRESENTATION AT THE PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL COUNCIL: VERED SAID THAT ARABS NOW LIVING IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WOULD NOT FIND IT IN THEIR INTEREST
TO GO TO THE PNC, OR TO ACCEPT DESIGNATION AS REPRESENTA-
TIVES IN ABSENTIA. KING HUSSEIN, WHOSE LEVERAGE IS IN-
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CREASING, WOULD NOT APPROVE, SHE SAID, AND NOTED THAT IN
THE PAST YEAR THE ONLY JORDANIAN FUNDS COMING TO THE WEST
BANK HAVE GONE TO RELIGIOUS LEADERS--NOT (YET) TO ANY OF
THE NEWLY-ELECTED MAYORS. THE PNC WOULD PROBABLY END UP,
AS IN TIMES PAST, WITH WEST BANK AND GAZA EXILES SERVING
AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.
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